

Throughout our restaurant's history our doors have remained open for people near and far, providing a place of comfort and community during our most challenging times. Events like September 11th, Hurricane Sandy, multiple citywide blackouts, and heavy snowstorms didn't waiver our steadfast commitment to you, our Sparks family and the community we serve. Today, as we face yet another challenge, the (COVID-19) Coronavirus, our commitment remains unchanged.

Therefore, in order to minimize the serious health risks from (COVID-19) Coronavirus to our guests, employees and families, heeding our local and federal government's advice, we will temporarily close the restaurant. While we are aware of no (COVID-19) Coronavirus cases among the staff, closure is the right decision to support the effort in containing the spread of (COVID-19) Coronavirus. These are unprecedented times and the environment is continuously changing. We cannot predict the duration of this temporary closure, but we are hopeful that the collective efforts we all take will allow us to move past this crisis quickly.

What this means for our employees is that you will be laid off from your employment with Sparks Steak House, effective March 28<sup>th</sup>, 2020. We will notify you when we plan to reopen. Once we reopen, the plan is to bring staff back in a phased approach, by seniority and based on the needs of the business. It is also our hope that once the doors are open, the demand for The Sparks experience will quickly return to the levels we saw before this event.

We will not be able to continue your base compensation and benefits during the period of this temporary closure.

However, please note, although the following is not mandated by law but as our commitment to the wellbeing of our employees to help them during this crisis, we are also doing the following:

On Wednesday, March 25<sup>th</sup> you will receive your final regular base paycheck equal to 40 hours for the period March 16<sup>th</sup> – March 22<sup>nd</sup>, (when the restaurant was closed).

On April 1<sup>st</sup>, Sparks will provide pay for 40 hours, at a rate of \$15.00 per hour for the period March 23-March 28<sup>th</sup>.

The March 25<sup>th</sup> and April 1<sup>st</sup> checks will be subject to standard tax withholdings and 401k contributions but we will not make medical, dental, vision deductions from either check. Sparks will cover the cost of the premiums of medical, dental and vision benefits for you for those paychecks.

On Wednesday, April 1<sup>st</sup>, Sparks will provide PTO (Paid Time Off) as applicable accrued hours but again, we will not take any medical, dental, vision deductions from this check as Sparks will cover the cost of the premiums. Standard tax withholdings and 401K contributions will be applied to the PTO.

If you are participating in the Empire Medical Plan, Sparks will cover the full cost of your benefits through April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

After April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020 you may continue those benefits via COBRA.

We suggest that you contact the department of labor for unemployment benefits following your layoff.

Further, all employees may take advantage of the following benefits where applicable:

State unemployment benefits available at: <https://www.ny.gov/services/%20unemployment0>

We stopped transit deductions along with the March 25<sup>th</sup> paycheck. You can access the remaining balance on your BRI debit card.

If you participate in the company 401K plan, your contributions via payroll deduction will stop and we will provide you options, if applicable, in regard to your balance. You will receive information from Fidelity regarding your account. Please contact Fidelity directly at 1-800-835-5097 with any questions.

If anyone else develops symptoms or tests positive for COVID-19, as a matter of public safety and the safety of our community, please contact Shailesh or Susan at the contact information provided below. Your privacy is of the utmost importance and discretion will be exercised, but knowing if someone has contracted the virus will allow us to take extra preventive measures and will help inform the staff and further plans going forward.

In the meantime, the best thing everyone can do is continue to follow the CDC/WHO guidelines to prevent further spread of the virus.

It is our most heartfelt regret to temporarily close the restaurant, but we must be mindful of the safety and well-being of our employees and the community.

Shailesh Desai may be contacted at: [sdesai@sparkssteakhouse.com](mailto:sdesai@sparkssteakhouse.com) or at 212.687.4806

and Susan may be contacted at: [hr@sparkssteakhouse.com](mailto:hr@sparkssteakhouse.com) with any questions.

Very sincerely and wishing you good health,

Mike and Steve

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